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magnetism. The labors of these gentlemen and the results at which they have arrived are highly creditable both to their industry and ability, and we confidently hope that the aid required for the furtherance of objects so important to science will be generously extended. A greater number of instruments as well as more observers, are necessary to the perfection of the plan, and although some public-spirited individuals have already contributed liberally in its behalf, the funds are yet quite insufficient.

4. — *Selections from the Poetical Literature of the West.* Cincinnati: U. P. James. 1841. 12mo. pp. 264.

OUR fellow-citizens of the West have found time, in the midst of the labors attending the settlement of a new country, to do not a little towards increasing the stores of American poetry. This neatly printed volume is a very valuable work, containing as it does, specimens from all the principal poetical writers of that great and growing region. Some of the names in the table of contents prefixed to this volume can hardly be said to belong to the West. Ephraim Peabody, for example, was an inhabitant of Cincinnati only a short time. He is a New England man, by birth and education, and now by residence. He has shown powers, both as a beautiful poet and a brilliant prose-writer, that bid fair to carry his fame far beyond all local boundary lines, and to place his name high on the list of great national writers. Still, it was a very proper thing for the editor, to select from such pieces of Mr. Peabody as were written while he was a citizen of the West, or were suggested by Western subjects, or the associations with his Western life. Several other writers whose works have furnished materials for this volume, were born on the eastern side of the mountains. We should therefore, naturally expect but little in the literary style or tone of feeling, to mark the greater part of these productions, as peculiarly the offspring of Western genius. But here we should find ourselves somewhat mistaken. These pieces are most of them redolent of the Western soil. They bear unquestionable marks, not merely of Western intellect, but of Western lands. The richness and grandeur of Western scenery make a strong and peculiar impression upon the mind of the emigrant, when he is first brought under their influences. They work a change in his intellectual being, modifying all his ways of thinking, and coloring all his expressions. If he becomes a writer, he becomes a very different one from what he would have been had he remained at home. In short,

he becomes strongly assimilated to the native-born sons of the West.

The thinkers and writers of the West start fresh in matters of intellect, as well as in matters of domestic life. They set out from a stage in the progress of thought, which older communities have left far behind them. We find in their works many images and trains of sentiment reproduced, which belong to the earlier periods of the literature of a more ancient society. They take less for granted, as in political disquisitions they go back to first principles, and prove over again what long-established institutions presuppose as on all hands admitted. We find in this volume, for example, many pieces devoted to the commonplaces of love and gallantry, that in this part of the world we have long gotten through with safely ; and we speak of this by no means in the spirit of censure, but simply to show how perfectly natural has been the origin and growth of Western poetry. Patriotic feelings, too, come up again among the effusions of the Western muse, with a freshness and originality, which belong to the recent possession of a country to be patriotic for. Both these qualities are far from indicating any want of poetical genius, or any tendency to repeat the commonplaces, which elsewhere are worn threadbare ; on the contrary, they show the independent action of the Western mind, and present interesting phenomena to the observer who curiously traces the steps of the poetical spirit.

Undoubtedly there are faults and imperfections in Western poetry. We notice, for instance, what to be sure is not unknown to some of our own bards, many of those absurd comparisons of things known, to things unknown, — that is to say, attempts to illustrate things that we have seen, or may see, by telling us they look like things that we never have seen, and cannot possibly see. We open the book at random, and find on page 55 these lines, upon an infant sleeping on its mother's bosom.

“ It lay upon its mother's breast, a thing
Bright as a dewdrop when it first descends,
Or as the plumage of an angel's wing
Where every tint of rainbow-beauty blends.”

The dewdrop is unimpeachable, though rather small ; but the angel's wing with the rainbow-tints is an unfit object to compare an infant to, because it irresistibly suggests a peacock's tail, that being the only thing in the feathered line that we can think of, as at all resembling a rainbow, and if the child looked in the least like this, all that can be said is, it must have been a very uncommon “ infant phenomenon.”

There is much beauty in the poem of Mr. Gallagher. George D. Prentice, the wittiest editor of the West, is also one of the most brilliant poets. We should like to give his lines on the "Birthday of Washington."

There is a fine piece, which we are vexed not to find room for, by a poetess whose name is new to us; "The Green Hills of my Fatherland," by Mrs. Laura M. Thurston. It is all good, except the "filling the green silentness with melody and mirth," which is an impossibility.

5. — *De la Littérature et des Hommes de Lettres des Etats-Unis d'Amérique.* Par EUGENE A. VAIL, Citoyen des Etats-Unis. A Paris : Librairie de Charles Gosselin. 1841. 8vo. pp. 617.

It is pleasant to see a volume of the goodly size and appearance of the one before us, containing a summary sketch of the literature and the literary men of this country, and intended to gratify the curiosity or to guide the researches of that portion of the reading public in France, who wish to know what is doing in the Transatlantic world of mind. It should contain sufficient evidence, that we are doing something else on this side of the water besides raising cotton and tobacco, or buying wines and silks, in which two relations, probably, more than in any others, our existence is generally known to the subjects of Louis Philippe.

Such a publication may prepare the way towards paying off a debt, which has already acquired some magnitude, — a debt reckoned not in francs or dollars, but in the means of intellectual nourishment and gratification. Some acquaintance with French literature is now esteemed among us, not merely as an elegant accomplishment, but as a necessary part of the education of both sexes. The poets and the historians, the novelists and the philosophers of France, are here read and appreciated by a much larger circle than is conversant with the literature of any other country in Europe, of course excepting England. The range of books and authors comes down to the present day, new French publications now making their appearance quite regularly on the counters of our booksellers. It has been Mr. Vail's intention to present a show-bill of American wares in return, which, in point of number and variety, at least, offers no meagre aspect. He briefly enumerates and characterizes the principal literary productions of this